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cups are acrid and caustic, as are the *Araceæ*, while *Coptis* is simply bitter.

I have been able to offer but a sketch of our poisonous plants, and may have omitted to mention a few. I have been surprised in studying them to find how little appears to have been written about them except as regards their medicinal effects, and how this little is distributed in many different books. I cannot close this article without a renewed warning against the reckless use of herbs whose effects may be deleterious or even fatal.

A GLIMPSE AT COLORADO AND ITS BIRDS.

BY C. E. AIKEN.

EARLY this morning, the 17th of October, as I was riding past Beaver Creek, a large and beautiful mountain stream that flows through portions of El Paso, Fremont and Puebla Counties, my attention was attracted by a great twittering among the feathered tribe in an enclosure on the creek bottom. As there seemed to be an unusually large congregation of species for this season of the year, I dismounted from my pony, and leaning upon the cottonwood rail-fence, I watched the birds for nearly an hour, noting the different varieties, and observing the actions of each.

Immediately in front of me was a low, dense, wild-plum thicket, overrun and interwoven with hop-vines, but at this season nearly stripped of its leaves; and it seemed this morning as though each fallen leaf had been replaced with a little feathered songster. At least a dozen species were represented; but the white-crowned sparrows were by far the most numerous, and the singing or twittering of these it was, that first drew my attention.

Beyond this thicket, a thrifty growth of cottonwood extended along the banks of the creek from right to left, from the midst of which the songs of numerous robins, and of one or two other birds, rang out as clear and joyous as in early springtime. Many of the trees had their trunks encased in wild grape or hop-vines, and most of them were bare of leaves; but occasionally a tree clothed in a bright yellow foliage relieved the monotony and beautified the view. A high, rocky, barren ridge that formed the west

wall of the creek canon extended across the background. At my right hand was a small stubble-field in the midst of the tangled brush, and a little to the left a clump of scrubby oaks. Several small trees scattered through the foreground, with here and there a clump of differently tinted red, green or yellow bushes, completed the landscape. Imagine now the whole enlivened with birds and you have the entire picture.

On account of their bright plumage and boisterous actions, Woodhouse's jay and the magpie were most prominent; particularly the former, of which there were about a dozen individuals that kept flying in and out among the bushes before me. Occasionally one would fly up on to the limb of a tree, where it would pause but a moment to swallow the morsel of food it had brought, or to look about it, and then off it went with a wild, chattering note. The low oak bushes that are so abundant in the foothills are the chosen haunts of these birds, and they are never found at any great distance from them. A magpie in the cottonwood grove, espying me, came over directly to satisfy his curiosity, which, by the way, is a prominent feature in his character. He alighted on the top of a fence-stake within ten feet of me, and giving his beautiful, long, glossy tail a jerk, and ducking his head impertinently, he uttered a harsh, bold note of inquiry; but when I turned my head to obtain a better view of him, he was off in an instant.

Another noticeable bird was the arctic finch (*Pipilo arcticus*). These were to be seen everywhere, among the bushes, on the ground, or flying from one thicket to another and, from their abundance, form one of the characteristic birds of this section. At this season they are very quiet, and usually keep themselves concealed in the brush; but during the early part of the season, the males were seen on every hand, perched in the top of some bush, and singing the same song that we are accustomed to hear from our "chewink" at the East. Nearly all of them have already left for warmer regions, and a few days more will probably see the last of them here, until they return next April. I noticed one of these little fellows busily scratching on the ground beneath some bushes close by, and nearly buried among the dead leaves he had heaped up around himself. Becoming shortly aware of my presence, he straightened up, raised the feathers of his crown into a crest, and twitching his little head first one way and then another, he sur-

veyed me from head to foot; then, as though satisfied that all was not right, he hopped cautiously to the next clump of bushes, and then flying close along the ground, disappeared in the thicket.

A dove, that alighted near me, stretched up its neck, looked timidly at me an instant, and then flew away, and a Townsend's flycatcher that came down from the cedar-clad ridge behind me to quench its thirst, lingered about for a few moments and then, becoming frightened at some invisible thing, hastened back to its secluded retreat. A red-shafted flicker rapped industriously for awhile, on an old dead cottonwood, and then left for more productive fields. Hearing the low whistle of the cedar bird above me, I looked up and saw several of them flying over. These were the first I had seen for nearly a year. In response to my call a flock of Arkansas finches (*Chrysomitris psaltria*), that were flying past, settled among the topmost twigs of the thicket, and silently eyed several purple and house finches that occupied similar positions about them. These little beauties are the last to greet us in summer, and among the last to leave in autumn, which is quite unusual in our summer visitors; those coming last being generally the first to leave and *vice versa*. They did not become common here this season until the first of July, yet I noticed them last fall as late as the fifth of November. The males still wear their summer plumage, and appear at a short distance as bright as when they first arrived from the South.

From the cottonwood grove, I recognized the familiar notes of the song sparrow, and soon one of these appeared in the edge of the thicket near me, with a Lincoln's finch for a neighbor. A flock of tree sparrows just from the North, and a solitary chipping sparrow that had lingered a few days behind the rest of his tribe, were also among the occupants of the thicket. The Oregon snowbird too, and the more recently described *Junco annectens*, were each represented there by a single individual; and once I thought I saw a chat among its branches, but as I have not observed any of these birds for a month, I was probably mistaken. Then a flock of six or eight bluebirds (*Sialia arctica*), probably an old pair with their young, passed on their way southward, and three or four Brewer's blackbirds that seemed to have no destination in particular made a short halt near by. Then a flock of thirty or forty noisy, cawing, Maximilian's jays settled down on the stubble-field where they remained until one of their number, seeing me, gave a caw, when

with a great racket they all rose together like a flock of blackbirds and returned to their haunts among the cedars far up the cañon. For some time a pair of mallard ducks had been circling about as though looking for a place to alight, and finally they selected a bend in the creek just in front of me. Above the ridge beyond the creek, a turkey buzzard was floating listlessly in the morning sun, apparently without the least exertion on his part. I watched him carefully for several moments as he circled about, but could not detect the slightest motion in his wings.

One other bird I saw here to which is attached a good deal of interest, the white-necked crow (*Corvus cryptoleucus*). I have found these birds common along the base of the Rocky Mountains, from Cheyenne at the north, to Trinidad at the south; and from the Snowy Range, to a point thirty miles out on the plain, yet Mr. Ridgway writes me that these birds "are entirely out of their previously known range." I strongly suspect that this bird has been mistaken by naturalists, who have ornithologized in this section, for the common American raven (*Corvus carnivorus*), since it seems to me impossible that any one should remain here any length of time without seeing it; still the Western bluebird (*Sialia Mexicana*), and several other birds which are equally abundant here, are in the same predicament. The raven is said to be common in Colorado, but during a year spent in collecting in different parts of the territory, I have seen but a single pair!

HARVEST MITES.

BY PROF. C. V. RILEY.

IN the "American Entomologist" (vol. 1, no. 5) an account was given of the eight true insects, and of some other ringed animals or articulates, known to be parasitic on man. The insects are, the head-louse (*Pediculus humanus* Linn.), the body-louse (*Pediculus cervicalis* Linn.), the crab-louse (*Pediculus pubis* Linn.), the human bot-fly (*Æstrus hominis* Gmelin), the common flea (*Pulex irritans* Linn.), the chigoe (*Pulex penetrans* Linn.), the common bed-bug (*Acanthia lectularia* Linn.) and the big bed-bug (*Conorhinus sanguisuga* Le C.).